

# The Ripline

The BUHABS newsletter  
Issue 3, 1999-00



Welcome to the Ripline, the BUHABS newsletter this is the third edition of the newsletter this term. This is packed full of things for you. Inside you will find out about the BUHABS web site from Simon, we also have a list of people who have been flying this year. A report from the first balloon meet of the year and a few other things.

## Up and coming Events

This term there are two dates for your diary. The first is a visit to the local pub Bristol Blue on Monday 31st January. The pub can be found just up from Clifton down shopping center on Whiteladies road. We will be in the pub from 20:00 onwards so pop in and have a pint or two. The second is an opportunity to get the balloon out. We will be meeting in the Anson rooms in the union building on Wednesday 16th February at about 20:00. Please check your mail as if we change the times we will inform you.

## Notes From the Editor.....

First and foremost welcome back and welcome to the new millennium, I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. Now to bring you briefly up to date with BUHABS, at the end of last term we managed to get some flying in, which was good. BUHABS also attended the Icicle balloon meet in January, this was the first fiesta of the new year and proved to be very good, 2 out of the 4 slots were fly-able and inside you can read all about it. This months Ripline is again packed full of stuff, as I just mentioned we have a report from the first meet of the year, and an article by Simon J, and we also welcome some ballooning jargon from Paul Spellward and information on a solo round the world trip. I look forward to hearing from you about your experiences in the club. Take care and enjoy your flying, soft landings.

## Flying List.....

This is all the people who have been flying so far and how many times, are you on the list?

Tim Dudman x 5  
Kieran Halsey x 2  
Angus Arneaud  
Jame Nolan  
James Halbestadt  
Ian Jones  
Rafel Boyncz  
Emilio Garcia  
Will Temple

Liz Farmer x 2  
Simon Jenkins x 2  
Tom Ellenrieder  
Tim Kempton  
James Hinton  
Lee Hooper x2  
Laura McCloud  
Phi Waller

Tim Locke x2  
Sue Gillard x 2  
Simon Church  
Phil Garrard  
Karen Murl  
Mark Lamont  
Sarah Marshall  
Alex Oppinted



# Around the World

Chicago, January 12, 2000; Kevin Uliassi and the J. Renee flight team are planning a solo balloon flight around the world this winter. Launch of the J. Renee Balloon will take place at Nimtz Quarry in Loves Park, Illinois (near Rockford). Exact launch time will depend on global wind patterns needed to carry the pilot on a 10-to-20-day flight of nearly 20,000 miles around the Earth at speeds ranging from 50 to 150 miles per hour.

Uliassi (pronounced oo-lee-OSS-ee) decided to continue this project after major supporter Praxair pledged its continued support last summer. Praxair will be supplying the helium, oxygen, nitrogen and ethane gases that are used in the flight. Hoekstra Building Automation in Homewood, IL, is providing facilities for the J. Renee communication centre. Others supporting the flight include Lamcotec, Inc., of , Mass., which developed the special coating for the balloon envelope and La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries, in Hammond, Ind. The Illinois Institute of Technology, Uliassi's alma mater, will continue to provide support for the J. Renee web site. New supporters this year include Emery Air Charter, which has been housing the balloon and related equipment its hangar at Rockford Airport, and Meggitt Avionics, which is providing equipment for the redundant burner control. This year, Lou Billones of Windsong Services, Inc., Omaha, Nebraska, will serve as Chief Meteorologist for the flight. Lead Meteorologists Scott Risch and Bruce Telfayan will assist him.

The J. Renee balloon, named for Uliassi's wife, is a hot air/gas hybrid with an envelope composed of two sealed nylon compartments. The upper compartment, or gas cell, will hold some 420,000 cubic feet of helium. The cell fits tightly atop the lower compartment, a cone filled with about 120,000 cubic feet of air heated by a propane burner. With the helium fully expanded, the all-white balloon will resemble a giant ice cream cone, 140 feet high from balloon top to capsule bottom, and almost 100 feet in diameter at the point where the helium sphere fits on the hot air cone. This hot air/gas hybrid, known as a Rozier (roz-e-AYE), is designed to maintain altitude by warming the helium at night, when contraction of the cooling gas would normally cause the balloon to sink. The J. Renee will fly under US registration number N761JR. It was inspected by the FAA in November and has received an experimental air worthiness certificate as an "Uliassi AM-12 balloon, serial no. 001".

The balloon will carry the pilot in a small-unpressurised capsule with insulated walls that is designed to shield the pilot from the minus 50-degree Fahrenheit temperatures he is apt to see at the balloon's cruising altitude of about 30,000 feet. Oxygen and propane tanks hang outside the capsule, which is attached to the envelope via a standard hot air balloon burner frame.

Uliassi says fitting his 6-foot-3-inch, 195-pound frame into the snug compartment filled with water bottles, pre-packaged food, batteries and instrumentation "will be like living in an ice chest for two weeks." He will wear an oxygen mask above 12,000 feet, a minimum altitude that the balloon is expected to see only rarely in the circumnavigation attempt. An auto pilot will fly the balloon while he sleeps, sounding an alarm should a problem develop.

This is the third year that Uliassi will attempt a global flight. Last year, no flight was possible after over flight clearances for China were cancelled. During the previous year, the balloon was launched but the flight was cut short when malfunctioning vents resulted in a ruptured gas cell.

# The 28th Icicle Balloon Meet

It is still dark, there is ice on the ground, I am cold and hungry and stood in a field surrounded by balloonists and balloon spotters in woolly hats. Welcome to the Icicle balloon meet. It was the brainchild of Dante balloon group and has proved to be over the years a meet of mixed success. The event set in a field in Marlborough is the first balloon meet of the year. This was the first time that I had been to the meet and looking at years gone by I was not totally convinced we would fly. So when I was told the phone in was at 05.45 I was rather shocked, especially when I found out we were going regardless of the met. We left Bristol about 06.30 and got to the meet just before sunrise at about 07.25. At the field there were about thirty other balloons setting up, among them was Lee Hooper and Paul Spellward. We got out the van and wondered round the field getting rather cold and then went off to the barn for briefing. For the first time ever briefing was brief, we got a vague weather report and a message to wave to steward when we were taking off, and some info on prizes.

By the time we got back to the field there must have been over sixty balloons there, things were looking good, not just for the us but also for the spotters. We set up and went through the safety briefing. The balloon was duly inflated by our pilot for the day Tim Dudman in the basket with him was Sue, Jane, Phil and myself; the retrieve consisted of Simon and Liz. Tim waved at a steward who duly waved back, we then proceeded to take off. The weather was really strange above the trees it was really fast and below them there was no wind at all, this allow balloons to catch up with one another. We went over the first patch of trees and then went down into the field, and came to a stop along with ten other balloons. The variation in the winds allows the pilot to have a reasonable amount of control over their direction, this meant we had balloons to the left and the right of us which was awesome.

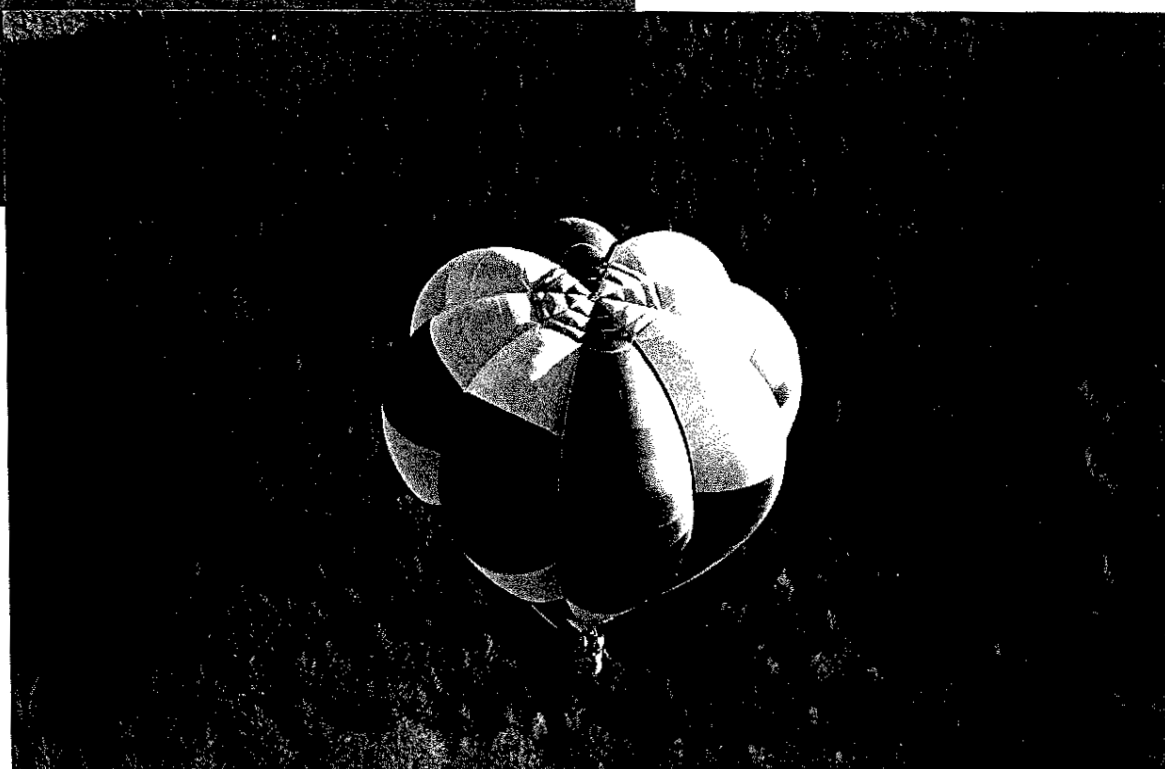
After about an hour of flying we decided to call it a day and land. For some strange reason at this point the wind had decided to pick up, which meant the landing was a little faster than we would have wished. Tim shouted the words "hold on" as he pulled the ripline and we dragged through the field, which was a little, exciting. The farmer, his wife and dog then came out to greet us, and really could not have been more pleasant. The retrieve arrived just after we packed the balloon and we went off for a spot of breakfast, oh and to refuel.

A mug of tea and about four bacon rolls later, I was less hungry and ready to refuel the balloon. After refueling we pottered about the launch site waiting for the slight winds to decrease before we could set off again. Lee set up his balloon and we waited, and waited. The spotters came and looked at Lee's balloon much to his disgust. We then waited some more, other balloons came back and went but we just waited. Then the call was made and we went the balloon was up and ready to go. Not as many balloons as the morning but still a brilliant flight. The flight was for just over an hour, one of the highlights was passing a glider at rather close range. We ended up landing in a field, and were to be greeted by the farmer's children. The farmer then arrived and confirmed that we were exactly where we thought we were. Due to the lack of gate we had to do a carry out, however it was not too far.

To top off a brilliant days flying we went off to the pub for a spot of dinner. On the way, Tim pointed out that our grid reference added up to 28 and that we could have won a prize, however Lee pointed out that prize giving was at 15.00 and we had missed it by two hours. After a burger and a coke we headed back to Bristol arriving back at around 19.30.



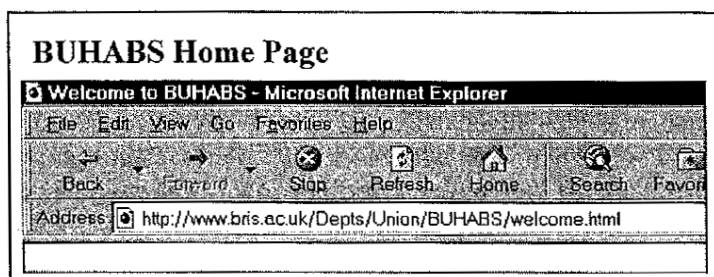
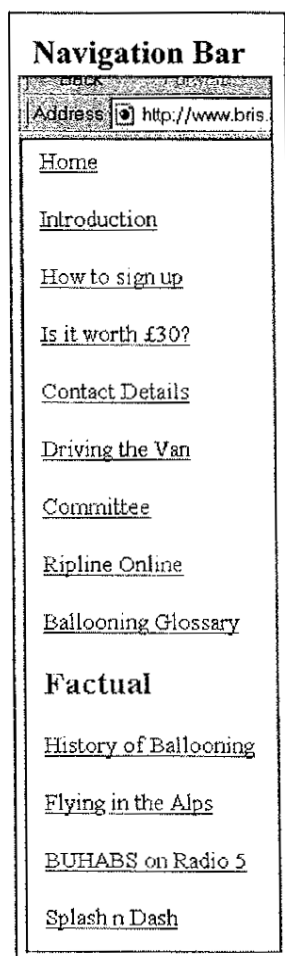
A few photos from the Icicle balloon meet in January of this year. The above picture is of the launch field just after we took off. Bottom is a balloon we passed over just before we landed. In the middle is a picture of balloons doing a low pass over a field ahead of us.



## Note from the PUT

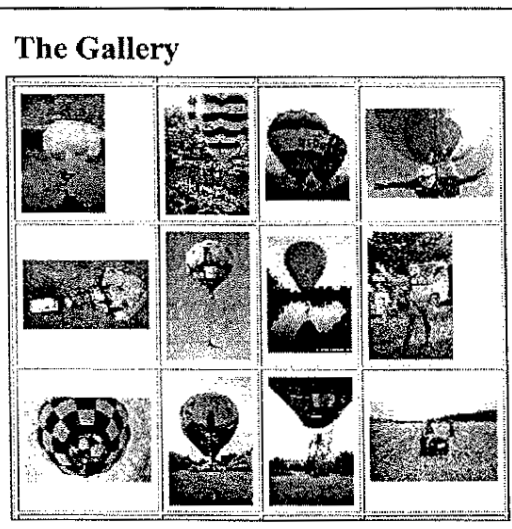
I hope you all enjoyed Christmas and New Year. If it seems like a struggle to start the new term, feel sorry for me, I have been back since January 4<sup>th</sup>! The BUHABS balloon was seen flying on New Years Day with Tom and Tim at the controls when most people were recovering from celebrations the night before. BUHABS has also had a successful outing at the Icicle Balloon meet on the 9<sup>th</sup> January. Things are looking up and hopefully the weather will be kinder to us this term and everyone will have a chance to fly.

My article in this issue of the Ripline is a brief introduction to the new BUHABS Web Site. (It only needs to be brief because you can see it for yourself.) One of the benefits (?) of being the PUT is being lumbered with silly jobs that no one else



wants. Re-writing the club web site has been one of them. To find BUHABS Online point your browser at the URL below. The site is pretty self-explanatory really. You can navigate the

site by clicking on the links on the left-hand side and read articles written by members past and present. Perhaps you have something you would like to contribute. You can also find details of club merchandise (mugs and



clothing) that you can purchase. There is a gallery of members' photographs showing BUHABS out and about. You can see some of the older BUHABS balloons (Uvistat) and some of the pilots' own balloons. There are also pictures of

our trip to Vermenton in France last summer holidays. Some of the photos are old and it would be nice to update them with some you have taken. If you have any comments or contributions you can send them to me by e-mail. Contact details are on the site. Happy Surfing.

Simon.

## Feedback on the last Ripline:

Inside the last issue of the Ripline you would have found two pieces of paper, one was a log book and on the back of that a crewing record for what you do when you fly with BUHABS. The log book is for you to fill out in the pub after the flight, all you have to do is put in the date you flew and the place/time you took off from and landed, the pilot will help you, from this you can work out how long you have been flying in total and where you have been. The other information on it is the type of balloon you are in, if you fly with BUHABS it is an 0-105, and reg number is G-BXBM, finally you can put in a comment about the flight.

On the back is the record of what you do before the flight. For this all you need to do is fill out the date and place a tick in the box of what you did. This is simply so you can keep track of pre-flight tasks that the pilot has asked you to do. Hopefully by the end of your time with BUHABS both the log book and the crewing record will be full. If you lose your record or fill it out before the end of the year I will happily send you another one, just send me an e-mail. If this part of ballooning interests you then why not get a qualification in crewing, the course is run by the BBAC. For further details contact either myself or any of the pilots and they will be happy to give you details of courses run by the BBAC.

The other information in the last issue of the Ripline was a weekday availability list. I just want to take this opportunity to clear up a few problems that people are having with it. The first is that the pilot will not fly every available slot, so even if the weather is good the pilot still may not fly. The reasons for this are simply; there is not enough crew on that day, the pilot has other commitments either university or a job. Even if the weather is good and the pilot is free, we still need a driver and they are very limited, so if you are aged 21 or above and are interested in being a driver please get in contact with Simon Church and he will inform you of what you need to do. The final thing is for you, by saying that you are free to fly does not commit you to that flight, you still have the choice and can make a decision when the pilot phones you. So for members who have not sent back their forms please do so, you have nothing to lose and if you don't you are only letting yourself down.

## Some BUHABS ballooning jargon?

**SKY:** Everything above the ground. When in doubt, pilots try to stay there.

**WALL:** Hard things made of stones. Despite many attempts by BUHABS pilots to prove otherwise these are not good places to land. Avoid at all costs.

**MASTER/SLAVE:** Purported to refer to fuel cylinders, but anyone who has flown will know that it actually describes the pilot-crew relationship (as envisaged by the pilot that is).

**NOMEX:** A dead dwarf, also some fabric pilots keep failing to burn

**COW BURNERS:** Self-explanatory; used at BUHABS barbecues

**SQUELCH:** A winter retrieve in a freshly manured field, or a control on the radio?

**BASKETS:** Salutation frequently used by farmers to balloonists  
(on the phone) *"Hello..mumble..bad met..Yawn..20 knots..mumble..rain..not flying..bye:"* The pilot has a hangover and cannot be bothered to get out of bed this morning.